United Nations TD/B/65(2)/2

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Distr.: General
23 July 2018

Original: English

Trade and Development Board
Sixty-fifth session, part II
Geneva, 1–4 October 2018
Item 4 of the provisional agenda
Economic development in Africa

Activities undertaken by UNCTAD in support of Africa

Report by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD

Executive summary

This report covers the activities carried out by UNCTAD in support of Africa from May 2017 to April 2018. The report also describes the impact that the work of UNCTAD has had on the development of Africa in the following areas: transforming economies, tackling vulnerabilities and building resilience, improving competitiveness, enriching multilateralism, empowering people and investing in their future.

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I. Major highlights in 2017

A. Contributions to major international events that shaped policymaking in Africa

1. The following international events, which took place in 2017, will have an impact on Africa and the work programme of UNCTAD in Africa:

(a) Member States of the African Union signed the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area in March 2018. UNCTAD played a key role in supporting the design of the Agreement and in building consensus on the African Continental Free Trade Area;

(b) In October, a high-level conference on international investment agreements was held in Geneva, Switzerland, as part of the fifth session of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Investment, Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Productive Capacity-building and Sustainable Development. UNCTAD, in partnership with the Economic Commission for Africa, held a side event on the Pan-African Investment Code and the investment chapter of the Agreement;

(c) In July 2017, UNCTAD, in collaboration with the Government of Rwanda and the United Nations Development Programme, convened in Rwanda a continent-wide youth entrepreneurship summit called Youth Connekt Africa. The event provided African youth with an opportunity to interact with continental leaders, including the President of Rwanda, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD and the Special Adviser to UNCTAD on Youth Entrepreneurship and Small Business.

B. Impact of the Regional Office for Africa

2. Since its establishment in 2015, the Regional Office for Africa has aimed to strengthen the impact of UNCTAD and the effective delivery of development outcomes for Africa, and meet the needs of the African Union Commission and its member States on how to use trade as a tool for sustainable development. The Regional Office continues to spearhead the delivery of UNCTAD technical assistance in a demand-driven manner, with the organization playing a critical role in providing trade capacity-building to African countries. Key focus areas are as follows:

(a) African Continental Free Trade Area;

(b) Trade facilitation;

(c) Small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) development;

(d) Investment;

(e) Support to regional economic communities[1] and individual African countries.

3. The impact of the Regional Office on the work of UNCTAD on trade in Africa includes ongoing collaboration between UNCTAD and the African Union Commission, and the provision of technical support to the Commission and its member States. In May, October and November 2017, UNCTAD participated in four meetings of the African Continental Free Trade Area Negotiation Forum that took place in Addis Ababa and Abuja. Further, UNCTAD provided organizational resources to support the design and negotiation of the Agreement. The Agreement is expected to break down barriers to intra-African trade and create new opportunities for African communities to increase the volume and value of exports through additional markets, thereby facilitating structural transformation in Africa.

[1] These include the Economic Community of West African States, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the East African Community and the Southern African Development Community.

4. UNCTAD continued to work with the African Union and its member States to formulate inclusive and sustainable development strategies and policies on key areas in the implementation of trade facilitation reforms, which are pivotal in boosting the competitiveness of African industry. UNCTAD supported the African Union in finalizing its trade facilitation strategy. At the national and regional levels, the Trade Facilitation Empowerment programme supported the establishment and strengthening of national trade facilitation committees across Africa. UNCTAD also provided support for regional approaches to diversification strategies in the regional services policy review of the Economic Community of West African States and the five-year trade and development strategy of the East African Community.

5. The Regional Office strengthened capacity for SME development in Africa. During the African Ministerial Forum held in connection with the Global Entrepreneurship Congress in Johannesburg, South Africa, government ministers from several African countries shared experiences on how they could better empower SMEs in their countries. The event featured addresses by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD and the Chief Economic Officer of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

II. Outcomes and impact of UNCTAD activities in support of Africa

A. Transforming African economies

6. UNCTAD research and policy analysis provides pragmatic policy recommendations that support African countries in transforming their economies to accelerate sustainable development and facilitate the region's integration into the world economy.

Energy access

7. In November, UNCTAD launched *The Least Developed Countries Report 2017: Transformational Energy Access* in Lesotho, Senegal, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. Key findings and policy messages of the report, which explored energy access in developing countries, were presented during the launches. The least developed countries have the most people without access to electricity, and the proportion has grown steadily since 1990. The report noted that expanding access to adequate, reliable and affordable modern energy was critical for productive capacities and structural transformation, and in promoting inclusive growth. In addition, the report emphasized the need for policies in strengthening electricity systems and electricity governance and finance in those countries, harnessing the energy-transformation nexus and international dimensions.

Tourism for structural transformation

8. In July, the *Economic Development in Africa Report 2017: Tourism for Transformative and Inclusive Growth* was launched in several African countries. The report examined the key policy barriers to unlocking the potential of tourism to contribute to structural transformation and provided policy recommendations on how to overcome them. The report also highlighted the sector's potential to address Africa's sustainable development challenges and discussed how tourism, if properly harnessed, could foster inclusive growth by providing opportunities to vulnerable groups, including the poor, women and youth; promote economic diversification through niche tourism markets; support intraregional tourism and promote peace and security. Delegates and regional groups[2] that attended the high-level segment on exploiting the potential of tourism for transformative growth in Africa during the sixty-fourth annual session of the Trade and Development Board in Geneva in September welcomed the research and analysis.

[2] Africa Group; European Union; Group of 77 and China; Kenya; Ethiopia; and Zimbabwe.

9. During the reporting period, UNCTAD undertook a series of training workshops in Africa aimed at building human and institutional capacities of African stakeholders (policymakers, trade negotiators, civil society and entrepreneurs) in order to harness the opportunities arising from the services sector and services trade.

Building capacities of African trade officials in services trade negotiations

10. Services are critical to national economies and integral to the Sustainable Development Goals. The achievement of several of the Goals is contingent upon the availability of well-functioning infrastructure and basic services and universal access to both. Productive and efficient services can boost sector competitiveness, which is critical to the economic transformation of Africa. UNCTAD conducted follow-up activities to support Lesotho, Rwanda and Uganda in implementing their services policy reviews. As part of ongoing efforts to support and build the capacity of research and training institutions in Africa on trade issues, UNCTAD in October strengthened its collaboration with the Trade Policy Training Centre in Africa in the United Republic of Tanzania and delivered a training course on services.

11. As part of its ongoing support to the regional economic communities, UNCTAD initiated the development of a regional services policy review for the Economic Community of West African States, which aims to support regional integration and ensure coherence in member States' negotiating positions across various trade forums.

Harnessing investment and leveraging technology for structural and economic transformation

12. UNCTAD conducts activities across its three pillars of research and policy analysis, technical assistance and consensus-building to help African countries harness domestic and foreign investment as a means of catalysing structural transformation in their economies.

13. Investment policy reviews produced by UNCTAD support African countries in attracting foreign direct investment. The reviews reflect the findings of diagnostic studies conducted by UNCTAD of the legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks for investment specific to each country, and identify areas for improvement. During the reporting period, UNCTAD completed the investment policy review of the Gambia and initiated preparations for investment policy reviews in Angola, Cabo Verde and Chad. The implementation report of the investment policy review of Mauritius was published, and the implementation report of the investment policy review of Nigeria was initiated. UNCTAD, in collaboration with the World Bank/International Finance Corporation and the United Nations Development Programme Kenya, provided technical assistance in the development of the Kenya Investment Policy.

14. Information and communications technology (ICT) policy reviews are instrumental in leveraging technology for Africa's economic transformation. The reviews are aimed at helping countries harness the potential of ICTs to enhance competitiveness, promote economic growth and foster structural transformation. Egypt formally launched its new national e-commerce strategy in December 2017, which was jointly developed by UNCTAD and the Ministry for Communications and Information Technology. At the request of the Ministry of Trade and Industry of Rwanda, UNCTAD began working on a national e-commerce strategy that will be completed in September 2018.

15. Other tools, such as national green export reviews, promote climate-friendly trade and production strategies. UNCTAD pursues objectives aimed at addressing climate change and promoting climate-friendly trade and production strategies, including in the green economy. As part of such projects in Ethiopia, Madagascar, Morocco and Senegal that aim to promote exports in the green sector, UNCTAD conducted national stakeholder workshops on green exports in Madagascar and Senegal in July and October, respectively, and published the national green exports reviews of the agricultural sectors of Madagascar and Morocco in July.

16. The aim of UNCTAD science, technology and innovation policy reviews is to support countries in developing their science, technology and innovation capacities in order to build their productive capacities and transform their economies. In October, UNCTAD delivered the science, technology and innovation policy review of Rwanda. Sixty science, technology and innovation stakeholders and policy experts, including 10 women, participated in a training session on innovation that was held during a national workshop on science, technology and innovation policy. UNCTAD began work on the science, technology and innovation policy review of Ethiopia and conducted several missions during the reporting period aimed at supporting the development of science, technology and innovation policy.

B. Tackling vulnerabilities of African economies and building their resilience

17. UNCTAD assists African countries in reducing the vulnerability of their economies due to commodity dependence, and in seeking opportunities to increase value addition of their economic activities from commodities, including agricultural goods in the following manner:

(a) Providing research-based policy recommendations: In August, UNCTAD published a report on fishery exports and the economic development of selected least developed countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, the Comoros, Mozambique, Myanmar and Uganda). The report identified the constraints to the sector's development and provided policy recommendations on how best to overcome them;

(b) Enhancing development linkages in the extractive sector in Central Africa: As part of a project on strengthening the capacity of the Economic Community for Central African States to enhance development linkages from the extractive sector, UNCTAD completed the two-year implementation of the initiative in Chad and the Republic of the Congo. Online platforms with information on investment opportunities identified through the initiative were also launched;

(c) Improving value addition of cotton by-products in Eastern and Southern Africa: UNCTAD, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, is implementing a project on such value addition in Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. UNCTAD held national capacity-building workshops in Zimbabwe (September), the United Republic of Tanzania (November) and Zambia (December) and supported countries in implementing their national action plans to develop cotton by-products.

18. UNCTAD helps reduce the exposure of African countries to debt by providing them with targeted technical advisory services on debt management through the technical assistance programme, the Debt Management and Financial Analysis System, also known by its acronym, DMFAS. This UNCTAD programme provides support to developing and least developed countries to strengthen their capacity to manage debt in an effective and sustainable way, in support of poverty reduction, development and good governance. The programme provides support to 22 African countries to strengthen their capacity to manage their debt. During the reporting period, the programme lent support to the Sudan in developing its national debt statistics and portfolio reviews, and to Angola, Togo and Zimbabwe in developing debt data validation calendars. In November, 25 African delegations and 4 international organizations based in Africa attended the eleventh Debt Management Conference of UNCTAD, which focused on external and domestic debt, debt management and public finance.

19. UNCTAD is implementing a project on the regulatory and institutional framework of sovereign debt governance aimed at improving policymakers' capacity in this area in five least developed countries, two of which are in Africa (Togo and Mauritania). During the aforementioned Debt Management Conference, meetings were held with representatives from Togo and Mauritania to discuss possible venues for a study tour. In February 2018, a study tour was conducted in Morocco, and debt managers were briefed on the institutional and regulatory framework governing debt management in that country.

20. In November, UNCTAD held the first session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Financing for Development, which among other things, discussed illicit financial flows – a topic that is of particular interest to a number of African countries. The policy recommendations emphasized donor countries' role in the achievement of internationally agreed targets on official development assistance, and in assisting developing countries in combatting crime, corruption and tax-related illicit financial flows.

21. During the reporting period, UNCTAD in partnership with the Macroeconomic and Financial Management Institute of Eastern and Southern Africa, held a 10-day regional workshop aimed at strengthening the ability of countries to carry out systematic debt data validation on their debt databases. UNCTAD, in partnership with the World Bank, participated in Debt Management Facility missions to Benin, Djibouti, Madagascar, Uganda and Zambia. In addition, as part of ongoing collaboration with partners, the Debt Management and Financial Analysis System worked with the European Union, the United Nations Development Programme and the African Development Bank in the implementation of technical assistance projects in Africa.

22. The *Trade and Development Report 2017: Beyond Austerity – Towards a Global New Deal* provides advice to African countries on how to deal with the vulnerabilities posed by globalization and the international financial system. The report argues that, with the appropriate combination of resources, policies and reforms, the international community has the tools to galvanize investment in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and promote sustainable and inclusive outcomes at global and national levels.

23. UNCTAD supports African economies in vulnerable categories, such as the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries, to overcome the sources of their vulnerabilities and build resilience to shocks in various ways:

(a) Enhancing fishing exports: In October, UNCTAD held a regional workshop in Mozambique for policymakers and fisheries practitioners from African least developed countries. The workshop was part of a project on building the capacities of selected least developed countries to upgrade and diversify their fish exports. As a result of the workshop, 83 fisheries experts, including 35 women, from the Comoros, Djibouti, Mauritius, Mozambique and Uganda gained skills in meeting safety and sustainability standards imposed on fisheries imports in major import markets. As part of its ongoing work to develop measurable indices of productive capacities, UNCTAD held a national workshop in Rwanda in April 2018;

(b) Building productive capacities: UNCTAD convened a one-day brainstorming meeting on productive capacities in Geneva with 11 representatives of several United Nations entities,[3] regional organizations such as the Commonwealth Secretariat, and academic institutions.[4] The meeting aimed to enhance the understanding of productive capacities and foster further collaboration on the development of measurable indicators. UNCTAD work on productive capacities was also discussed at a high-level panel as part of the sixty-fourth session of the Trade and Development Board held in Geneva in September, as well as during the Expert Meeting on the Ways and Means of Improving the Implementation of Priority Areas Agreed in the Istanbul Programme of Action, in Geneva in November.

24. UNCTAD provides technical support to African least developed countries to facilitate their graduation from the least developed country category. In that capacity, UNCTAD provided technical and advisory services to the Government of Equatorial Guinea on the challenges of graduation from least developed country status, leading to the country's graduation in July 2017.

[3] Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Trade Centre, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

[4] Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis, Kenya Institute for Public Policy and Research Analysis, and University of Canberra.

25. UNCTAD provides policy advice and technical assistance on rules of origin and market access in order to enhance the utilization of trade preferences. As part of ongoing efforts to enhance policymaking skills in the least developed countries and their understanding of operational areas of international economic law and policy, including on duty-free and quota-free access, rules of origin and services waivers, UNCTAD and the European University Institute held an executive training seminar on rules of origin in international trade in May, and a workshop for Geneva-based delegates from the least developed countries in preparation for the next meeting of the Committee on Rules of Origin of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in October. The seminars addressed the analysis and drafting of rules of origin based on the notifications by preference-granting members in compliance with the ministerial decision on preferential rules of origin for least developed countries (tenth WTO Ministerial Conference, Nairobi, 2015). UNCTAD monitored the WTO least developed country group notifications of utilization rates of duty-free and quota-free market access and assisted the group in drafting advisory notes and memoranda on least developed country issues at WTO.

C. Improving competitiveness in African economies

26. UNCTAD supports African countries to improve their competitiveness by helping them enhance the efficiency of their state apparatus and achieve a better distribution of functions between the State and markets. Such support takes place through the creation of new regulatory and legal frameworks, revisions to existing frameworks, their improved enforcement, the conduct of awareness-raising seminars and through the development of toolkits adapted to clients' needs.

27. UNCTAD contributes towards a more efficient functioning of markets and States in Africa through its activities on competition law and competition policymaking on the continent. During the reporting period, UNCTAD conducted several activities related to a project on strengthening competition and consumer protection enforcement capacities in Ethiopia and facilitated the revision of the Trade Competition and Consumer Protection Proclamation in that country. Further, UNCTAD coordinated a study tour for the Trade Competition and Consumer Protection Authority to the Zambia Competition and Consumer Protection Commission in November. In March 2018, Ethiopia launched an integrated market information system designed to provide timely and accurate market information to farmers and consumers.

28. UNCTAD launched a new regional programme on competition and consumer protection policies for Central Africa in Cameroon in November with country representatives of the Economic Community of Central African States in attendance. A four-day regional workshop was held to discuss the revised community competition rules for the Community, and to validate the draft guidelines on consumer protection for the region. Prior to the regional workshop, UNCTAD held consultative workshops with Community member States in June, October and November in Cameroon, the Republic of the Congo, Chad, Gabon and the Central African Republic.

29. The Middle East and North Africa programme for enhancing regional integration of the beneficiary countries of the region held a regional training workshop in December on competition law enforcement for the competition authorities of those countries, which included Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. A study on women's access to economic activities in countries of the region was launched. Regional training workshops to validate guidelines on agency effectiveness, consumer associations and business engagement for consumer protection were held for countries of the Middle East and North Africa region in February and April 2018, respectively.

30. In July 2017, a joint UNCTAD–Japan Fair Trade Commission training workshop on competition investigation techniques for African competition authorities was held in Geneva, with representatives from some countries of the Middle East and North Africa region in attendance.

31. As part of a Development Account project on development policies for sustainable economic growth in Southern Africa, UNCTAD supports regional industrialization in the region, including by identifying policies to support the development of regional value chains. In October, UNCTAD held the first session of the Multi-Year Expert Meeting on Enhancing the Enabling Economic Environment at All Levels in Support of Inclusive and Sustainable Development, and the Promotion of Economic Integration and Cooperation in which development challenges and opportunities faced by southern African economies were discussed.

32. UNCTAD provides concrete guidance to African countries on how to harness trade as a tool for economic transformation and improve upon their trade policy regimes, in order to boost their competitiveness in regional and global markets and facilitate their integration into regional and global value chains. UNCTAD provides direct technical assistance to African countries and regional economic communities in the area of non-tariff measures as follows:

(a) Building the capacities of African trade officials in non-tariff measures: Non-tariff measures pose barriers to trade and hinder Africa's potential to contribute to sustainable development through trade. African countries need to identify and address technical barriers to trade in order to leverage trade's potential to contribute to economic development;

(b) Providing ongoing support to African countries on non-tariff measures, including through training aimed at building African policymakers' skills in this area. At the request of the regional economic communities of the Tripartite, composed of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the East African Community and the Southern African Development Community, UNCTAD supported the collection of data on comprehensive non-tariff measures as a step towards improving transparency on these measures in 12 pilot countries in Africa. Following the completion of data collection and national validation workshops in Botswana, Malawi, Mauritius, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe, the data on non-tariff measures was integrated into the non-tariff barriers reporting, monitoring and eliminating mechanism of the Tripartite (www.tradebarriers.org) and the global Trade Analysis and Information System database (trains.unctad.org);

(c) Holding relevant events: During the eleventh session of the WTO Ministerial Conference that was held in December, UNCTAD held events on the multilateral trading system, the fish trade, fisheries subsidies and non-tariff measures that informed the engagement of African countries in the ministerial deliberations and negotiations;

(d) Facilitating trade by means of the Automated System for Customs Data programme (ASYCUDA) of UNCTAD: In 2017, as part of the programme, a series of capacity-building training sessions on the customs automation system were conducted for national customs administrations and revenue authorities. These efforts are aimed at ensuring long-term sustainability of the programme and enhancing the capacity of 27 African countries to increase revenue collection and reduce clearing times and costs. In the second quarter of 2017, the Revenue Authority of Rwanda adopted the ASYCUDA System for Performance Measurement;

(e) Building capacities to enhance trade logistics: UNCTAD, in partnership with the United Nations Development Account, is carrying out a project aimed at building capacities of developing countries to shift towards sustainable freight transport. Project activities included two workshops in February and March 2018 for two East African corridors – the Northern Corridor Transit and Transport Coordination Authority and the Central Corridor Transit Transport Facilitation Agency. UNCTAD is supporting the corridors in identifying, developing and implementing policies to promote and finance sustainable freight transport strategies using the UNCTAD Framework for Sustainable Freight Transport (see https://sft-framework.org/). UNCTAD launched the Framework, a web-based step-by-step methodology, in October;

(f) Building the capacities of African trade officials to mainstream trade policies: UNCTAD conducted workshops in four countries aimed at supporting integration and mainstreaming trade in national development plans. UNCTAD conducted several missions to Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger in October and November, during which the national steering committees of the Enhanced Integrated Framework in the four countries validated the project. The project proposal was submitted to the Secretariat of the Framework in early 2018. A national diagnostic trade integration study drafted as part of the project was validated and incorporated into a consolidated document that was submitted in October to the Government of Benin. A pre-validation workshop to finalize the national trade policy of Benin was held in February 2018.

33. UNCTAD assists the least developed countries in mainstreaming trade policies into their development plans under a number of projects developed in this stream of activities. As part of a project on the Enhanced Integrated Framework mainstreaming the diagnostic trade integration study action matrix and building an industrial policy for the Gambia, two advisory missions were carried out jointly with the Government and other stakeholders to define a national trade strategy and a national industry policy. The two documents were validated during a national validation workshop that was held in February 2018.

34. As a follow-up to the first bilateral technical workshop that was held in Djibouti in 2016, a second joint workshop was held in May 2017, with Djibouti and Ethiopian officials to evaluate progress and identify the way forward in the elaboration of a project proposal for joint action and coordination on transit, transport and trade facilitation. UNCTAD, in collaboration with the Ministries of Commerce of Djibouti and Ethiopia, is developing an regional Enhanced Integrated Framework project. The Enhanced Integrated Framework National Steering Committee of Ethiopia has approved the project.

35. UNCTAD supports countries in their efforts to promote traditional products through geographical indications and thus increase their value. In November, UNCTAD supported Benin in capacity-building in geographical indications, and the 24 women producers who attended a workshop to validate the code of practice for the geographical indication of cassava ("Gari Sohoui") that was developed by UNCTAD, reviewed, revised and validated the document, thus ensuring that it reflected their traditional knowledge.

Enterprise development

36. The Empretec Programme of UNCTAD helps SMEs in Africa build competitiveness through an array of targeted interventions, including the promotion of business linkages between SMEs and large firms. During the reporting period, UNCTAD provided assistance to 14 established Empretec centres in Africa through advisory services, policy workshops and seminars based on the tools and proven discussion platforms offered by the Entrepreneurship Policy Framework.

37. UNCTAD strengthened the capacity of Empretec centres in Cameroon, the Gambia, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia by undertaking training-of-trainers' sessions. Six trainers received international master trainer certifications. UNCTAD started its collaboration with the Government of Kenya, which joined the Empretec network in July. The Government of Kenya, through the Kenya Institute for Business Training, held a pilot Empretec workshop in Nairobi, followed by a four-day international training-of-trainers workshop that brought together 20 Empretec trainers from African countries.

38. UNCTAD assisted countries in entrepreneurship policy formulation. Six national stakeholders' workshops on entrepreneurship policies took place in Cameroon, the Gambia, and the United Republic of Tanzania. Cameroon finalized a national entrepreneurship strategy; the Gambia launched a national entrepreneurship policy and action plan and the United Republic of Tanzania presented an inclusive national entrepreneurship strategy. In March 2018, UNCTAD, in collaboration with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, assisted the Government of Ethiopia in developing a national entrepreneurship strategy.

39. Six representatives from five African Empretec national centres attended the twenty-fourth annual meeting of Empretec Directors in Geneva in December 2017. The two-day

meeting provided participants with an opportunity to share their experience and products, to highlight the key achievements of the past year and to discuss strategic and operational issues related to the Empretec programme.

40. In December, UNCTAD and the Rwanda Development Board organized the Africa Entrepreneurship Policy Forum. Some 120 delegates from 20 countries shared their experiences, learned from best practices and explored avenues for strengthened cooperation at the regional and continental levels. African Governments, under the auspices of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the African Union strategy for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, identified policies, initiatives and programmes designed to support the development of an enabling entrepreneurial ecosystem.

41. UNCTAD supported selected African countries in identifying business linkage opportunities that link local entrepreneurs with large firms in horticulture, sustainable tourism (in the United Republic of Tanzania) and construction (in Zambia). Over 600 farmers in the United Republic of Tanzania and 200 entrepreneurs in Zambia received assistance. In 2017, 175 Tanzanian farmers were trained through the Empretec and Farming programme as a business methodology, and 60 small-scale suppliers successfully completed an Empretec entrepreneurship training workshop.

Investment and enterprise

42. UNCTAD supports Africa's development through investment and enterprise, including by developing resources to enhance the business environment. African countries benefited from UNCTAD assistance in the area of investment and enterprise in order to build their competitiveness and enhance their attractiveness as destinations for foreign investment and the establishment of businesses. In May, UNCTAD contributed to discussions on and prepared a policy guidance document to assist in the negotiations on an investment chapter for the African Tripartite Free Trade Agreement under negotiation between the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the East African Community and the Southern African Development Community.

43. Building on the *World Investment Report 2009*, UNCTAD continued to work with other international organizations on operationalizing the UNCTAD Principles for responsible agricultural investment that respects rights, livelihoods and resources. Several African countries benefitted from significant investment inflows in agriculture. In July, UNCTAD, in collaboration with the World Bank, organized a capacity-building workshop for the private sector in South Africa to share experiences and views on large-scale agricultural investments.

44. In September, UNCTAD helped the Malawian Investment and Trade Centre develop a guide on screening prospective agricultural investors through the Inter-Agency Working Group, which is comprised of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Bank.

45. The UNCTAD–World Bank Knowledge into Action Notes series, a compendium of practical, thematic guidance documents based on fieldwork carried out in Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania, for use by stakeholders in the implementation of responsible agricultural investment principles, was published in March 2018.

Governance and economic efficiency reforms, investment promotion and business facilitation

46. UNCTAD helps improve the competitiveness of African economies by providing them with tools to engage in governance and economic efficiency reforms. For example, several African countries benefited from UNCTAD support in the areas of accounting and reporting.

47. Another UNCTAD tool that provides support to countries is the Business Facilitation eRegulations programme, which assists them in simplifying and automating their rules and procedures on investment and entrepreneurship. The eRegulations system, which is operational in 17 African countries, contributes to increased transparency and greater institutional capacity, thereby facilitating business and making African countries more attractive to foreign investors.

48. During the reporting period, UNCTAD delivered a single-window system in Cameroon to enable enterprises and entrepreneurs to register their businesses online. UNCTAD also supported the development of trade portals that provide information on trade procedures in Benin, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal. The trade portal of Kenya was launched in December 2017.

49. A strong accounting infrastructure that produces high-quality corporate reporting is a critical factor for attracting investment, allocating scarce resources and promoting financial inclusion. During the reporting period, a regional workshop on financial inclusion with a focus on best policy practice and guidelines on accounting and insurance regulation for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises was held in Kenya in July. Over 70 participants from 11 African countries attended the workshop, which highlighted initiatives aimed at supporting such enterprises, including those that engage with vulnerable groups – women entrepreneurs, farmers and business owners at risk due to political instability and natural disasters.

50. African countries played an essential role in presentations and discussions at meetings of the Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts on International Standards of Accounting and Reporting. In November, 30 African countries participated in the thirty-fourth session of the Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts, which provided an opportunity to discuss countries' experiences relating to the implementation of the Accounting Development Tool, a capacity-building initiative in accounting and reporting.

51. UNCTAD presents awards to investment promotion agencies for their achievements in promoting investment for sustainable development. In 2017, the Ethiopian Investment Commission and the Board of Investment of Mauritius received the United Nations Awards for Promoting Investment in the Sustainable Development Goals in recognition of their work in spurring private investment in developing countries, thereby boosting economic activity and contributing to their achievement.

52. Senior investment promotion officials from several African countries participated in training events on investment promotion organized by UNCTAD, including in a regional seminar on the preparation and promotion of bankable Sustainable Development Goal projects and the creation of partnerships with outward investment agencies and institutions that was held in Johannesburg in May.

53. UNCTAD, in collaboration with the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, developed the Guiding Principles for the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States Countries' Investment Policymaking (ACP/85/037/17 Rev. 1). The Committee of Ambassadors of the Group approved the principles in May 2017.

54. In October, 20 African countries participated in a high-level international conference on investment agreements in connection with the fifth session of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Investment, Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Productive Capacity-building and Sustainable Development. During the conference, UNCTAD and the Economic Commission for Africa organized a side event on the Pan-African Investment Code and the investment chapter of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area.

55. In January 2018, UNCTAD and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation organized a high-level expert meeting on investment facilitation in Africa in Casablanca, Morocco. A set of proposed guiding principles for investment policymaking for the 57 countries of the organization – 28 of which are African countries – was discussed during the meeting.

56. UNCTAD conducted international investment agreement reviews in Botswana (June), Algeria (July), Libya (August) and Burkina Faso (December). UNCTAD also provided in-depth advisory services during a meeting of the African Union Continental Task Force in Libreville in July.

57. Investment promotion officials from Africa participated in a training course on the essentials of foreign direct investment held by the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies in Istanbul in January 2018.

58. UNCTAD, in collaboration with the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, organized a dialogue on investment promotion priorities in the least developed countries. African least developed countries presented their countries' needs in building capacity to promote investment. Following the dialogue, UNCTAD hosted the first meeting of the United Nations Inter-Agency Technical Committee on investment promotion for the least developed countries and published an issues note that discussed trends and key issues relating to foreign direct investment in those countries.

59. UNCTAD authored several publications on investment promotion and facilitation, including an issue of the *Investment Promotion Agency Observer*, entitled "Investment facilitation: The perfect match for investment promotion", which presents examples of tools and techniques in the global action menu for investment facilitation and other policy instruments and how they can be deployed.

60. The Smart Promotion Network monthly newsflash, which presents the latest information on trends in foreign direct investment, investment promotion strategies and practice, upcoming events and publications of interest to investment promotion professionals and policymakers, was disseminated to 2,149 subscribers, including 399 in Africa.

61. The UNCTAD flagship publication on investment, the World Investment Report 2017, analysed the impact of digitalization on international production and its implications for investment. According to the report, investment should be a central consideration in digital development strategies – an aspect that is often neglected. The report provided a comprehensive analysis of trends in foreign direct investment in Africa and a subregional analysis on investment, noting that flows of foreign direct investment ($59 billion) to Africa had declined by 3 per cent in 2016, compared with the previous year.

62. UNCTAD enhanced the capacities of African member States to collect data on foreign direct investment and of foreign affiliates and provided technical assistance to the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa in preparation for the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa Investment Report. In October, UNCTAD led an ad hoc expert group meeting organized by the Economic Commission for Africa in Ethiopia that explored policy options for boosting intra-African investment through the regional harmonization of investment policies and treaties.

Intellectual property

63. UNCTAD provides support to countries in the areas of intellectual property and innovation. With regard to capacity-building support for intellectual property in Africa, UNCTAD provided substantive inputs to the draft national intellectual property policy of South Africa and prepared a human rights analysis of the policy in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

64. In November, UNCTAD held a training session in Ethiopia for research directors on innovation, intellectual property and technology transfer in the agricultural sector. In March 2018, UNCTAD, in collaboration with the Ministry of Industry of Ethiopia and the World Health Organization, held a high-level discussion on patent law reform in that country to support the local production of innovative pharmaceutical products.

65. UNCTAD prepared an issues paper to assist partner States of the Tripartite with respect to the planned Tripartite Free Trade Area in their efforts to develop an intellectual property rights regime and facilitate discussions among negotiators.

Sustainable Stock Exchanges initiative

66. UNCTAD supports the Sustainable Stock Exchanges initiative to promote improved environmental, social and governance disclosure and performance. The initiative seeks to leverage the potential of stock exchanges to improve corporate reporting practices and transparency among listed companies in the area of environmental, social and corporate governance issues. During the reporting period, membership of the initiative grew to 68 exchanges. Exchanges in Benin, Botswana, Egypt, Kenya, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania, Tunisia, Zimbabwe and the West African Regional Securities Exchange benefited from engagement with the initiative on green finance and gender equality through webinars and the dissemination of guidance documents. Partnerships were formed to raise gender equality awareness with exchanges in Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa and the West African Regional Securities Exchange at the 2017 Ring the Bell for Gender Equality event held by the Sustainable Stock Exchanges initiative. Botswana, Kenya, Morocco, South Africa and the West African Regional Securities Exchange received support on green finance, and the Moroccan Capital Market Authority and the Johannesburg Stock Exchange received technical assistance during a technical workshop of the initiative in September.

Information and communications technologies for development

67. UNCTAD helps African countries to develop a favourable environment to benefit from opportunities created by ICTs, and to use the technologies to promote trade competitiveness through e-commerce.

68. UNCTAD supports African countries in their efforts to create an enabling environment and benefit from opportunities created by ICTs. During the reporting period, UNCTAD published the *B2C [Business-to-Consumer] E-commerce Index 2017*, which is aimed at supporting countries by benchmarking their readiness for engaging in e-commerce and identifying relative strengths and weaknesses in e-commerce processes. Africa ranks below the world average in Internet use, availability of secure servers, account indicators (for payments) and postal reliability. However, while credit card use in Africa is lagging, mobile money has become a popular payment method.

69. A multi-stakeholder initiative, e-Trade for all, was launched in 2016 to support developing countries in their efforts to engage in and benefit from e-commerce. Since its establishment in April 2017, etradeforall.org – an online knowledge-sharing and information platform – has received 2,000 monthly visitors on average, 50 per cent of which are from developing countries.

70. The UNCTAD Global Cyberlaw Tracker (unctad.org/cyberlawtracker) is the first global mapping of cyberlaws that tracks the state of e-commerce legislation on electronic transactions, consumer protection, data protection/privacy and cybercrime in the 194 member States of UNCTAD. Some 52 African countries have adopted e-transaction laws, 33 have adopted laws to protect consumers online, 50 have adopted laws on cybercrime and 43, on data protection.

71. The Intergovernmental Group of Experts on E-commerce and the Digital Economy, provides a platform for UNCTAD member States and other stakeholders to discuss policy-relevant topics in e-commerce and the digital economy and address associated challenges. UNCTAD held the first session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts in October 2017, with approximately 250 participants from more than 70 member States, 25 of which were from Africa. The Intergovernmental Group of Experts adopted UNCTAD policy recommendations on eTrade for all, rapid eTrade readiness assessments and the Global Cyberlaw Tracker. In April 2018, the Intergovernmental Group of Experts held its second session, which discussed how to foster development gains from domestic and cross-border e-commerce in developing countries.

72. As part of ongoing efforts to support regions in developing a conducive legal environment and ensure security online and in electronic interactions between enterprises, citizens and public authorities, UNCTAD surveyed government representatives in 38 countries, including in Africa. In collaboration with the World Bank, the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Justice, the Chamber of Commerce and the

Committee for E-commerce Development of Madagascar, UNCTAD delivered a training session on e-commerce best practices for Madagascar in October and November. More than 100 Malagasy participants from the judiciary, the Government and the private sector attended the session, which focused on the importance of building trust online and increasing the understanding of relevant e-commerce issues among stakeholders.

73. In action to facilitate the implementation in Madagascar of e-commerce legislation that had been adopted in 2014, UNCTAD delivered a capacity-building workshop in that country for magistrates (February 2018).

D. Making multilateralism work for African economies

74. UNCTAD plays a critical role in supporting African countries in making progress in negotiations on the African Continental Free Trade Area and the Tripartite Free Trade Area.

Support for the African Continental Free Trade Area

75. As part of its ongoing support to African countries in the negotiations, UNCTAD took part in an event held by the New Partnership for Africa's Development on the African Continental Free Trade Area in connection with Africa Industrialization Day (New York, United States of America) in November and disseminated analytical reviews of a plan for infrastructure development of Africa proposed by the Partnership.

76. UNCTAD participated in a series of meetings on gender and trade issues. In October, UNCTAD attended the annual Continental Workshop on Trade and Gender of the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa. The workshop focused on the importance of gender for trade and development in the context of the African Union's Agenda 2063, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Continental Free Trade Area. The workshop provided a platform to share experiences on trade policies that incorporate gender considerations and explored policy options on how regional integration processes in Africa could more effectively support member States in formulating and implementing gender-responsive trade policies, including in the context of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

77. As part of its efforts in support of regional integration, UNCTAD provided technical inputs for the second phase of the Tripartite Free Trade Area negotiations on possible options for engagement in light of the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area and other development considerations.

Support for multilateral trade negotiations

78. UNCTAD provides support to African countries to enhance their participation in WTO negotiations and to countries seeking to join the organization. Several African countries remain outside WTO and are at various stages of accession. In an effort to enhance their participation in accession negotiations, UNCTAD lent advisory support trade policy and negotiation capacities to Algeria, Comoros and the Sudan.

79. Further, UNCTAD helped Cabo Verde, Liberia and Seychelles meet the challenges of implementing WTO commitments and legal reform.

80. UNCTAD assisted African countries in ongoing WTO Doha Round negotiations and in their preparations for the eleventh session of the WTO Ministerial Conference that was held in Buenos Aires in December. In the lead-up to the Conference, UNCTAD held a retreat of the African Group's Ambassadors and Experts in July and provided support on key issues for negotiation, including on the Doha Round. During the Conference, UNCTAD held events on the multilateral trading system, fish trade and fisheries subsidies and non-tariff measures that informed African countries' engagement in the deliberations and negotiations of the Conference.

81. UNCTAD helped promote pharmaceutical manufacturing by providing substantive inputs to the draft regional pharmaceutical manufacturing plan of action (2017–2027) of the East African Community. This instrument aims to ensure policy coherence in the development of the pharmaceutical sector and access to medicines.

82. Further, UNCTAD in collaboration with the European University Institute, conducted a joint study that explored the institutional aspects of the Agreement on Trade Facilitation in West Africa.

E. Empowering Africans and investing in their future

83. UNCTAD contributes towards women's empowerment and gender equality in Africa by highlighting the gender ramifications of African macroeconomic policies and illustrating the social, structural, and cultural constraints that create or perpetuate gender inequality in Africa in sectors that have been or can promote dynamism through trade. UNCTAD also undertakes advocacy work aimed at raising awareness of issues related to trade and gender.

84. In its work on trade and gender research and policy analysis, UNCTAD developed an additional training package and tailored courses for the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa. Fifty participants successfully completed an online course on trade and gender conducted by UNCTAD in May–July 2017. UNCTAD is developing a second regional course for the East African Community that is designed to support participants in interpreting critical data on women's participation and gender inequalities in different economic sectors in partner States of the Community. An online course for Community stakeholders was delivered in April and May 2018.

85. UNCTAD, in partnership with Trade Mark East Africa, finalized a report on East African Community regional integration with a focus on trade and gender implications. The report examined the factors facilitating or impeding women's participation in trade in the East Africa region and provided recommendations on how to make East African Community regional integration beneficial for women. The report was published in February 2018 and formally launched in April.

86. As part of a project on informal cross-border trade for the empowerment of women, economic development and regional integration in Eastern and Southern Africa, launched in Malawi, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia in March 2016, UNCTAD completed the first draft of the project report in October. It explored how to address the complexity and opacity of trade barriers to informal cross-border trade and to mainstream gender in the design and implementation of supply-side services that support cross-border trade flows. UNCTAD conducted fact-finding missions in Malawi, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia in October 2017 to discuss the status of project implementation, and to hold consultations on informal cross-border trade and existing measures to facilitate the formalization of small-scale trade.

87. In December, UNCTAD participated in an event in Johannesburg on the challenges posed by regional integration, trade facilitation and gender equity in Africa. Opportunities for gender-sensitive integration and development were identified, along with barriers to regional trade facilitation efforts, including the role of Aid for Trade and gender equity challenges in regional integration efforts across Africa.

Youth entrepreneurship

88. UNCTAD provides technical support aimed at building the capacities of young people to start and operate their own enterprises. Youth entrepreneurship is an area of focus for UNCTAD. In collaboration with the Government of Rwanda and the United Nations Development Programme, UNCTAD convened a continent-wide youth entrepreneurship forum – Youth Connekt Africa – in Rwanda in July. The Summit provided African youth with an opportunity to interact with continental leaders and the Special Adviser to UNCTAD on Youth Entrepreneurship and Small Business and Chief Executive Officer of

Alibaba. Following the event, a select group of African young entrepreneurs participated in a skills-upgrading session on the digital economy at the Alibaba Business School in China.

Virtual Institute

89. UNCTAD continues to empower African researchers and academics in improving the quality of their teaching, learning and research. One of its main channels is the Virtual Institute. The Institute continued to pay special attention to strengthening trade and development-related teaching and research at academic institutions in Africa. In 2017, the Institute offered a one-week workshop on econometric tools for analysis of commodities to the University of Burundi in Bujumbura and provided support on the adaptation of Virtual Institute training materials on trade in commodities. The Institute also offered two online courses on trade and gender, and structural transformation and industrial policy, which elicited the interest of many African students and researchers.

F. General impact assessment

90. UNCTAD activities, which cut across the three pillars of research and policy analysis, consensus-building and technical assistance, contribute directly to Africa's development in five major areas: supporting the economic transformation of African economies, building the resilience of African economies to vulnerabilities, improving their competitiveness, enhancing their abilities to benefit from the multilateral system, and empowering Africans and investing in their future.

91. In terms of research and policy analysis, UNCTAD provides evidence-based strategic policy recommendations to African countries in the five above-mentioned areas of work. In 2017, research and policy-analysis products included several flagship reports, in particular the Economic Development in Africa Report 2017 on tourism, The Least Developed Countries Report 2017 on energy access and national policy reviews on investment, ICT, the green economy, services, and science, technology and innovation undertaken in several countries. Other research products included papers on a wide range of issues of relevance to African development, such as migration and entrepreneurship, fish exports and services, and analysis on intra-African trade and the African Continental Free Trade Area.

92. UNCTAD consensus-building activities raise awareness on a range of issues of relevance to African countries and contribute towards the sharing of lessons learned and best practices among African member States, and between them and other regions. Notable events held in 2017 included a high-level conference on international investment agreements in which UNCTAD and the Economic Commission for Africa held a side event on the Pan-African Investment Code and the investment chapter of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area and a continent-wide youth entrepreneurship forum – Youth Connekt Africa – that took place in Rwanda.

93. The Debt Management and Financial Analysis System and ASYCUDA, two leading technical assistance projects of UNCTAD, continue to impact on the region's ability to mobilize customs revenues, improve on customs efficiency and manage debt sustainably.

94. With regard to financial resources committed to Africa in 2017, total expenditure on national, regional and interregional projects in support of Africa stood at $15,887,439 (40 per cent of total expenditure), compared with $17,157,560 (44 per cent of total expenditure) in 2016; $14,583,363 (40 per cent of total expenditure) in 2015; and $10,425,656 (27.5 per cent of total expenditure) in 2014.